



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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Ozone Season Arrives; Open Burning Restricted in Some Counties

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 3, 2013) – Ozone season has officially begun in Kentucky, and for some counties that means taking extra care to learn before you burn. From May through September, open burning in Boone, Boyd, Bullitt, Campbell, Jefferson, Kenton, Lawrence, and Oldham counties is restricted to protect air quality.

Ground level ozone is a summertime pollutant, created when pollutants chemically react in the atmosphere in the presence of heat and sunlight.

“Open burning is a major contributor to ozone pollution during the warmer months of the year,” said John Lyons, director of the Division for Air Quality. “That’s why most open burning is restricted in those counties that have historically exceeded pollution levels permitted by the Clean Air Act.”

From May through September, the open burning of household rubbish, brush, tree limbs, leaves and natural growth from land clearing are not permitted in Boone, Boyd, Bullitt, Campbell, Jefferson, Kenton, and Oldham counties. A portion of Lawrence County is also subject to open burning restrictions during ozone season.

“These counties were previously designated ‘non-attainment’ for the pollutants ozone or particulate matter,” said Lyons.

Illegal burning could result in fines of up to \$25,000 per day per violation, he said.

Many people may not realize that burning trash – at any time of the year – is illegal in Kentucky.

“Today’s trash is different than the trash our grandparents used to burn,” said Lyons. “Plastics, chemicals and other synthetic materials are far more common in the things we throw away. Burning this trash releases high levels of toxic pollutants such as dioxins, lead and mercury.”

State law prohibits the burning of many materials including plastic, tires, cans, coated wire, carpeting and food waste. In addition, the burning of trailers, buildings, and construction and demolition debris such as shingles, drywall and insulation is prohibited. Painted, stained or treated wood products like fence posts, pallets, and furniture are illegal to burn, because they release dangerous toxins into the air. Items that cannot be recycled should be taken to a state-permitted landfill.

Smoke from open burning is a health problem that affects everyone, but especially children, the elderly, and those with existing ailments like asthma. Children are particularly sensitive to air pollution from open burning, because their bodies are still developing. Children also breathe 50 percent more oxygen per pound of body weight than adults do, so their lungs are exposed to more harmful pollutants.

To report illegal open burning or to learn more about open burning restrictions in your area, please call the Division for Air Quality’s open burn hotline at 1-888-BURN-LAW (1-888-287-6529) or visit <http://air.ky.gov>.

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